

India, and mentioned that it occurs in fruit orchards and pepper vine plantations of southern India. Payne (2005) also speculated that Square-tailed Drongo Cuckoos might breed in Kerala, from January to March, but this information is not corroborated by any other work.

The new records of Drongo Cuckoos described in this paper indicate a potentially wider distribution. Therefore, we suggest caution in trying to identify Drongo Cuckoos based solely on existing range information. Notwithstanding the difficulty of identifying the species correctly, there have been no previous records of any species of Drongo Cuckoo reported from the state of Rajasthan anywhere, published or online. Experienced birders, familiar with the bird fauna of Rajasthan, also reported not having seen, heard, or come across reports from this region (Dharmendra Khandal, *verbally*, on 13 July 2015). Hence, this would be the first report for the state. The presence of more than one individual, and its regularly heard songs indicate that this species might breed in Sawai Madhopur. We think that more observations of Drongo Cuckoos, which combine photographs and song recordings of the same individual, will be useful in determining which diagnostic features could be robustly applied to identify the species.

Interestingly, there is a recent proposal that Fork-tailed and Square-tailed Drongo Cuckoos be lumped together as one species (Gill & Donsker 2018b)!

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## Swinhoe's Minivet *Pericrocotus cantonensis* in Gujarat

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[http://www.indianbirds.in/pdfs/InPress\\_Theba\\_Patel\\_SwinhoesMinivet.pdf](http://www.indianbirds.in/pdfs/InPress_Theba_Patel_SwinhoesMinivet.pdf)

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Swinhoe's Minivet (Brown-rumped Minivet) *Pericrocotus cantonensis* breeds in central, eastern, and south-eastern China, and winters in parts of southern Myanmar, Thailand, and Vietnam (Taylor 2018). It is poorly known from the Indian Subcontinent with accepted reports from Bangladesh (Grimmett *et al.* 2011; Rasmussen & Anderton 2012), and its recent addition to the Indian avifauna (Praveen *et al.* 2018), based on records from Odisha (Rajguru & Ukil 2016), and Karnataka (Sridharan *et al.* 2016).

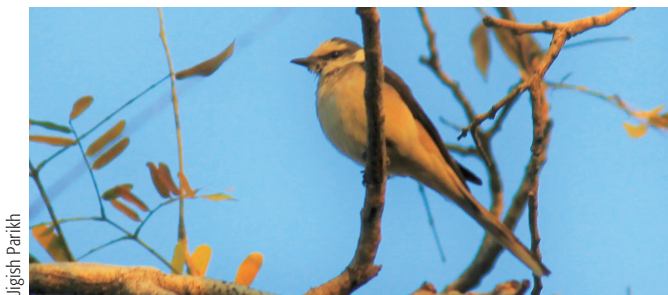
The observations presented below are from Indroda Nature Park (*henceforth*, INP) (23.20°N, 72.64°E), which is situated

on both the banks of Sabarmati River in Gandhinagar, Gujarat. INP is a protected forest area of about 428 ha with *Terminalia arjuna*, *Azadirachta indica*, *Senna siamea*, *Butea monosperma*, *Bombax ceiba*, *Acacia nilotica*, *Vachellia tortilis*, and *Mangifera indica* being the predominant trees.

On 25 February 2018, we went to INP while conducting a bird watching training programme, with a group of participants. At 0730 hrs, in a flock of Small Minivets *Pericrocotus cinnamomeus* perched in an *Albizia lebbek* tree, we spotted two slightly larger, and different looking minivets. Shortly, one of these birds flew away, and here we report about the other bird. The bird was

photographed [163] before it moved away onto an *Anogeissus sericea* tree. At this point, participants were asked to take photographs from every angle, to help in later identification. At 1045 hrs on the same day, we again spotted two birds that looked like Ashy Minivets *P. divaricatus*.

On 26 February 2018, we observed some minivets accompanying a flock of Small Minivets, but keeping a distinct distance from them. The Small Minivets occupied the top canopy, while the 'mystery' minivets often perched on trees *B. ceiba* with exposed branches. They were seen feeding on insects in the mornings. The entire minivet flock was found in the same patch on the 25th evening, and both, morning and evening on the 26th. Below are our notes and identification for the bird that we photographed.



163. A male Swinhoe's Minivet at Indroda Nature Park, Gujarat.

## Identification

Swinhoe's Minivet is very similar to the Ashy Minivet, and the features on our 'mystery' bird mostly matched those of a Swinhoe's Minivet:

- Distinct thin black eye-stripe (thinner than Ashy Minivet), and broad white forehead extending, beyond the eye, onto the fore-crown (doesn't go beyond eye in Ashy Minivet), which is one of the diagnostic features of a male Swinhoe's Minivet [163].
- Buff wash on the lower underparts is visible in all the images. (Usually underparts of an Ashy Minivet are white, without the buff wash.)
- Dark grey hind crown (jet black in adult male Ashy Minivet) is a feature of a male Swinhoe's Minivet [164].
- Colour of rump is buff-brown in Swinhoe's Minivet, grey in an Ashy Minivet [165].
- None of our pictures show the tail well and hence the white shafts on inner tail feathers that should ideally be present on a Swinhoe's Minivet cannot be seen.
- Swinhoe's Minivets usually have a pale yellow-tinged wing patch (vs white in Ashy) but this is generally hidden in the folded wing and is not seen in any of our pictures.



164. A dorsal view of a male Swinhoe's Minivet shows the dark-grey hind-crown, and nape.



165. White forehead, fine black eye-stripe, and a brown rump: all the diagnostic features of a male Swinhoe's Minivet.

Though our pictures do not demonstrate all the diagnostic features, the first four features together can be considered diagnostic for a male Swinhoe's Minivet.

## Discussion

Though there are several possible, or definite, records of Swinhoe's Minivet from India, apart from the two published records, with photographs available on Oriental Bird Images, eBird and Facebook, none of them are from Gujarat.

Very little is known about the status of this species in India due to its similarity with the Ashy Minivet. Most of the dated published records of the Ashy Minivet did not consider Swinhoe's as a possible confusion species as it was not well known to Indian birders (Praveen J., *in litt.*, via e-mail dated 05 March 2016). This is especially significant as females and first winter males of both species are often difficult to identify (Bakewell 2012). It is possible that upon proper scrutiny, several reports of Ashy Minivet from India may turn out to be Swinhoe's Minivet. A recent compilation by Tim Inskipp, of all known Ashy- and Swinhoe's Minivet sightings in West Bengal, suggests this (Grimmett *et al.* 2011). This record is an addition to the avifauna of Gujarat (Ganpule 2017).

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